

# CHARTER OF ETHICS AND DEONTOLOGY UNIGE

Version repealed and replaced by the "Code of ethics and professional conduct for the Geneva Institutions of Higher Education that entered into force on 5 December 2019"



UNIVERSITÉ  
DE GENÈVE

## PREAMBLE

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Teaching and research, core missions of the University, are founded on the respect for ethical values which are the source of the rules of conduct and the activities of the university community as a whole.

*The search for truth* within the quest for knowledge is part of the essential role of the University. It presupposes a rigorous mindset and responds to requirements for integrity and equity.

*Freedom in teaching and research* is at the heart of academic freedom. It is a necessary condition for the search for truth. The University and each member of the university community must affirm and respect it.

*Responsibility* towards the university community, society, and the environment is the consequence of the public mandate entrusted to the University. Academic freedom imposes a responsibility towards the collectivity of which the institution is a stakeholder. This gives rise to duties and obligations at the heart of the university community.

*Respect for persons* makes the University liable towards each person called upon, in one way or another, to contribute to its teaching and research mission, either as a subject or an object. This requires equitable treatment of the diverse members of the university community and the establishment of an internal climate conducive to the accomplishment of this mission.

This Charter concerns the entirety of the university community: professors, employees in teaching and research, students, administrative and technical personnel, and those whose affiliation stems from part-time or ancillary activities.

By adhering to this Charter, each member of the university community ensures legitimacy and consideration for the whole array of undertakings and actions of the University.

# 1. THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

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- a) The search for truth is inconceivable without the application of critical thinking. The University encourages dialog on the knowledge that it generates and transmits.
- b) The search for truth requires competence, critical observation of data, experimentation, comparisons between different points of view, and suitable sources. It is tightly dependent on the rigor of the applied methods, necessary condition for obtaining results which respond to criteria of objectivity and impartiality
- c) Each individual engaged in research is responsible for ensuring integrity in his or her quest for knowledge and in the interpretation of results.
- d) The contributions of each individual having participated to a significant degree in the conception and implementation of a research project or the contents of a course shall be recognized in an equitable fashion. In the same fashion, students must clearly indicate all contributions of others to their work.
- e) A balanced and equitable presentation of opinions and different schools of thought constitutes a significant contribution to the search for truth, but does not exclude the affirmation of critical points of view.

# 2. FREEDOM IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH

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- a) The University advocates academic freedom in the choice of themes for teaching and research. This freedom is indispensable for the development and sharing of knowledge, and for its transmission. The University guarantees the respect of this freedom.
- b) Individuals engaged in teaching, research, or studies must be able to present a critical opinion without facing censure or repression, while respecting the rights of others.
- c) Academic freedom also entails obligations. It must be exercised in respect for laws, university requirements, required duties, and program rules and regulations, as well

as the values of this Charter and the ethical norms stemming from it.

- d) Academic freedom, in practice, is tightly tied to the independence of the individuals who assert it, and to their personal integrity. In order to preserve that independence, the accepting of favors, gifts, invitations, or benefits in other forms is subject to a requirement for transparency.
- e) Facts or situations of a nature to cause a conflict of interest, whether moral or financial, must be declared. The same holds true for all sources of financing tied to activities carried out at the University.
- f) In no case shall influence from a function be used for personal ends or to the benefit of family members or friends. All external activity is subject to a duty of loyalty to the University.

### 3. RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY, SOCIETY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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- a) The responsibility of the University is to work towards scientific and cultural advances for society, through the search for quality and the promotion of excellence, recognition of the complementarity of disciplines, and openness to criticism.
- b) The University and all its members are responsible for their actions. They must be conscious of their impact and able to account for it.
- c) The greatest attention is paid to individuals serving as research subjects in the social sciences and life sciences, in order to protect their autonomy and personal integrity and to ensure their protection from the disclosure of information that could cause them harm.
- d) Research based on experiments involving living beings shall be carried out in rigorous respect of the specific ethical rules governing their use.
- e) In its contractual relationships with third parties, the University must be able to demonstrate its respect for the values affirmed by this Charter, as well as for the ethical norms of function and behavior that it expresses.

- f) Within the University community, the primary responsibility of the University is to guarantee the quality of the education provided to students. Educating future generations is a major objective.
- g) For faculty members, this education presupposes the highest competence and the determination to prioritize originality and objectivity while encouraging the transmission of knowledge by the most appropriate instructional methods.
- h) The members of the University community shall encourage the sharing of knowledge with the greatest possible number. Insofar as it does not directly prejudice their research activities, they shall strive to make the content of their research available to the broadest possible scientific community.
- i) The University is responsible for constantly evaluating the teaching provided, plans of study, and their contents. It is also responsible for respecting the norms and procedures that govern its own function, both in the domain of teaching and research and in that of administrative and technical services.
- j) Scientific research is recognized as having a right to innovation, but it is expected that it will consider the principle of precaution, that it will give thought to its end results and to the potential consequences of its results for society and the environment. The University and its members should be capable of questioning potentially dangerous applications.
- k) The members of the University community must demonstrate a willingness to dedicate their time to the University. They must put the resources at their disposition to good use, whether or not they are public, and be able to account for their rational and transparent use. They shall refrain from fraudulent or dishonest acts involving the property, finances, and accounting of the University.
- l) The members of the University community shall respect applicable laws, norms, and regulations. They shall reflect the values and the ethical norms of this Charter in the exercise of their own activities.

## 4. RESPECT FOR PERSONS

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- a) All forms of discrimination, be it on social, religious, ethnic, sexual, or any other basis, must be prohibited, both in the carrying out of teaching a research tasks as well as in relations within the university community. Particular attention shall be paid to individuals in vulnerable situations.
- b) Similarly, members of the university community shall refrain from behaviors that could constitute psychological harassment or sexual harassment.
- c) The University, like each member of the university community, is committed to fostering a workplace in which people are treated with equality and respect, regardless of their assignments, their powers, or their positions in the hierarchy.
- d) The same spirit of equality and respect shall guide nomination, evaluation, and hiring procedures. These procedures are based on the criteria of qualification and competence of individuals. When qualifications are equivalent, preference is given to the person whose gender is under-represented.
- e) The organization and implementation of exams shall ensure students equitable treatment based on the criteria of objectivity and impartiality.
- f) Respect for persons ensures for all members of the university community under contract the right to just payment for their services, a personalized job description, periodic evaluation and information interviews based on transparency and that comply with appropriate procedures, as well as the confidentiality of their personal information.
- g) Academic, administrative, and technical managers shall foster a stimulating work environment and a climate of trust that respond to the expectations of professional development and personal accomplishment of their fellow employees. They shall clearly communicate their expectations and do their utmost to rapidly resolve any conflicts. They shall promote ethical behavior, and maintain a climate of understanding and amicability permitting the expression of diverse points of view and criticism with mutual respect, and the recognition of the rights of others to express their opinions.

